

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the department for 68 years of service and in thanking all of the brave volunteers who do not hesitate to drop everything when the community calls in need of help. To all of these men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect our residents I say: "Stay safe."

H.R. 34, THE 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act, a bill which aims to authorize and promote biomedical research, mental health, opioid abuse assistance, and advance medical future research, but falls woefully short.

Unfortunately, this bill is a missed opportunity for Congress to take meaningful action to address skyrocketing drug prices. It also falls far short of the funding that is needed to support the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and to address the growing opioid abuse epidemic. I also believe that this bill puts the goals of pharmaceutical and medical device companies ahead of the needs of individuals.

As a Member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee and as an ardent supporter of biomedical research and public health funding, I was disappointed in the inadequate funding levels in this bill. Last year, this bill included \$10 billion in mandatory funding for the NIH. Unfortunately, the revised version that passed the House Floor last week included only \$3.8 billion for the NIH, and it is not mandatory spending.

And to make matters worse, this bill strips \$3.5 billion from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which provides critical investments to improve health outcomes through prevention activities like screenings and public health workforce training. We should be increasing support for public health programs, not robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Additionally, I am concerned that this legislation loosens Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards for approving pharmaceuticals and medical devices. While we do need to ensure that new, lifesaving treatments are available to consumers, we cannot do so at the expense of safety and efficacy. We need to make the FDA's standards stronger—not weaker.

Lastly, despite outcry from constituents and despite months of hearings and press conferences on the issue of rising prescription drug prices, H.R. 34 did not include any provisions to make drugs more affordable.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we have a shared obligation to ensure that ALL Americans have access to equitable, high-quality and affordable healthcare. While this bill does include a few good provisions, like positive steps to address mental health reform, it ultimately puts industry and profits over patients, and I therefore cannot support it.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DAVID SIMAS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service, dedication, and brilliance of our good friend and distinguished Portuguese American, White House Political Director David Simas. After eight years guiding the policy of the Obama Administration it is both fitting and appropriate to honor his service to the United States of America where he helped craft policy that improves the lives of countless Americans.

A self-proclaimed "Kid from Taunton, Massachusetts," Mr. Simas is the son of Portuguese immigrants, Antonio and Deolinda Simas. Although his parents did not attain more than an elementary school education, Mr. Simas ever excelled under their parentage. His father taught him the impact political policy has on everyday lives and his mother instilled in him the importance of family and the support they lend in times of need.

From his upbringing in Taunton, Mr. Simas went on to attend Stonehill College and later Boston College Law School. Returning home after graduation, he started a law practice and launched a political career of his own running for and winning a seat on the school board. Lending his talents to the local Portuguese community, Mr. Simas defended those in need and led successful political movements on behalf his friends and neighbors.

Later, as an advisor to the mayor of Taunton Mr. Simas helped devise a strategy to bring down the city's health care costs, working with the public sector unions to reach an agreement that saved the city money while ensuring access to good health care. Mr. Simas became well known in Massachusetts policy circles, and in 2006, he joined the office of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick where he served as Deputy Chief of Staff.

It was not long after the 2008 election of President Barack Obama that Governor Patrick connected the two, officially introducing Mr. Simas to the President and starting a run of eight years of service to the President and our country.

Calm, unflappable, clinical, and humble are just a few of the words used to describe Mr. Simas. He has taken his knowledge and political acumen and applied them to the service of the American people. He dedicated himself to pass health care reform, bringing coverage to millions who previously were left out of the American health care system.

Mr. Simas has always thought about how the decisions he makes and the issues he fights for impact everyday people. From his childhood in Taunton's Portuguese Village to the West Wing of the White House he has always been an advocate for the disadvantaged and underrepresented. I wish him, his wife Shauna, and daughters Rowan and Payton the best of luck in the years to come. In whatever endeavor he finds himself next, I know he will continue to ask himself the same question President Obama asked of him: "Are you doing something every day to help people?"

I am confident he will.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great appreciation that I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of

Representatives to recognize the service of Mr. David Simas and his many contributions to the wellbeing of the American people.

HONORING MS. LINDA SEIFERT

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Linda Seifert upon her retirement from the Solano County Board of Supervisors. Ms. Seifert has represented the Second District on the board since 2008 and served as the Chair of the Board from 2012 through 2014.

Ms. Seifert has been a longtime leader in our state's legal community. She earned her bachelor's degree from the California State University, Fullerton and then went on to complete her law degree at the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law. Ms. Seifert led a tremendously successful law career and became the first female partner at the McNamara Law Firm in Walnut Creek, before she went on to serve as General Counsel for the California Dental Association.

Since her election as Supervisor in 2008, Ms. Seifert has been a champion for Solano County's citizens and our community's future. She has worked to preserve the agricultural heritage and resources of our community and to create more park space and recreational services. For instance, Ms. Seifert successfully pushed to dedicate open space in Rockville Hills and secured \$13 million to permanently protect the land for future generations.

Education and responsive social services have also been Ms. Seifert's priorities as supervisor. To protect victims of domestic violence, she secured the site for the Family Justice Center in Fairfield. She believes that investing in members of our community improves both their well-being and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, Supervisor Linda Seifert has been a champion of our community for the past eight years. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROGER WILLIAMS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call 592 on final passage of H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act, I would have voted Aye, which is consistent with my position on this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO GUOWEI QI

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Guowei Qi, a senior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa, for earning a perfect score